THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE, MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH): (a) to (e) The information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

Mining of limestone in N.E. States

470. SHRI B.K. HARIPRASAD: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the North-Eastern States especially Meghalaya have surplus potential for mining limestone (mainstay for Cement units) which is being exported to Bangladesh without any value addition;

(b) whether many private investors evincing interest in investing in North-East on Cement manufacturing units with an aggregate capacity of more than 7 million tonnes, are now abandoning their investment plans due to discontinuance of excise duty exemption by Government; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF INDUSTRIAL POLICY AND PROMOTION, MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI ASHWANI KUMAR): (a) As per National Council for Cement & Building Materials (NCCBM) Report, Meghalaya has approximately 6.3 billion tonnes of cement grade limestone reserves. One cement unit Lafarge Umiam Pvt. Ltd., is exporting limestone to Bangladesh.

(b) and (c) No such information is available.

Patent of Ponni variety of rice

471. SHRI B.K. HARIPRASAD: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that famous Ponni variety of rice grown exclusively in Cauvery delta in Tamil Nadu has not been registered for Geographical Indication (GI) in India;

(b) whether a Malaysian retail giant Syarikat Faiza has registered Ponni rice under the Malaysian Trade Mark Act;

(c) whether in the year 1977 a patent was awarded to a US Firm for Basmati variety of aromatic rice on which India had to fight for over four years to get the US patent reversed;

(d) whether the Tamil Nadu Agriculture University has decided to contest the Ponni trade mark registration in Malaysia; and

(e) if so, details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF INDUSTRIAL POLICY AND PROMOTION, MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI ASHWANI KUMAR): (a) to (e) As per records of the Geographical Indications Registry, no application has been filed in respect of Ponni seeking registration under the Geographical Indications of Goods (Registration and Protection) Act, 1999.

M/s. Syarikat Faiza Sdn Bhd, a Malaysian rice importing agency, has registered 'Ponni' rice as a trade mark under the Malaysian Trade Mark Act. Government of India have taken up the issue with the Government of Malaysia expressing concern and requested them to take appropriate action for expunging the registration of Ponni as a trade mark from the Register. Tamil Nadu Agriculture University is, however, providing technical information and, details regarding Ponni variety.

The High Commission of India, Kuala Lumpur has informed that M/s Syarikat Faiza Sdn Bhd issued legal notices in 2007 to other dealers in Malaysia to refrain from using the term "Ponni" to describe the variety of rice marketed by them. This was contested by one of the other rice importing agencies in the local court, and the matter is currently sub judice.

Ricetec Corporation, a United States firm, was granted a patent by United States Patents and Trade Marks Office (USPTO) on 2.9.1997 under patent number US 5663484 entitled "Basmati Rice Lines and Grains" containing 20 claims, *inter alia,* pertaining to rice lines for aromatic rice and rice grains having characteristics allegedly similar or superior to those of good quality basmati rice. The grant of this patent was opposed by Government of India *vide* request for re-examination number 90/005/709 dated 28.4.2000 and on re-examination proceedings by USPTO, 15 claims out of the 20 claims were cancelled and title of the said patent was amended to 'Rice Lines BAS 867, RT 1117, and RT 112' *vide* re-examination certificate issued on 29.1.2002.

Industrial Units set up with Centrally Sponsored Scheme

472. SHRI SANJAY RAUT: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) the details of industrial units set up with the help of Centrally sponsored scheme in the country particularly in the Maharashtra during the last three years; and

(b) the details of investment made in these units during the above period, State-wise and Union Territory-wise?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF INDUSTRIAL POLICY AND PROMOTION, MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI ASHWANI KUMAR): (a) and (b) Under the liberalized Industrial Policy, the decision to set up an industry is based on the techno economic considerations of the entrepreneurs, which in turn depend on the initiatives of the State Governments in creating conducive environment by way of providing infrastructure facilities and other incentives. Central Government supplements their efforts to the extent possible. Department of Industrial Policy & Promotion is implementing a Centrally Sponsored Scheme i.e., Package for Special Category States, in the States of (i) Jammu & Kashmir, (w.e.f. 14.6.2002) (ii) Himachal Pradesh and (iii) Uttarakhand (w.e.f. 7.1.2003). Under this scheme, Capital Investment Subsidy, Interest Subsidy, Comprehensive Insurance and Transport Subsidy are provided to industrial units. The Department of Industrial Policy & Promotion does not implement such a scheme for Maharashtra. The details of plan funds released to the three States in the last three years is provided in Statement-I *(See* below). The details of industrial units set up and investment made in the three States is provided in Statement-II (*See* below).

The Department of Industrial Policy & Promotion is also implementing a Centrally Sponsored Scheme *i.e.,* North East Industrial and Investment Promotion Policy (NEIIPP) in the States of North East including Sikkim w.e.f. April 2007.